

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2385

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EO 11652 NA

TAGS: PGOV VE

SUBJ: NEW SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PRESIDENCY SWORN IN.

1. ON MARCH 15, PRESIDENT PEREZ SWORE INTO OFFICE AS SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PRESIDENCY DR. JOSE LUIS SALCEDO BASTARDO. SALCEDO REPLACES DR. EFRAIN SCHACHT, WHO RETURNS TO PRIVATE LIFE.

2. SALCEDO, WHO WAS 50 ON MARCH 15, IS A NOTED HISTORIAN WHO FOR ALMOST TWO YEARS HAS SERVED AS AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE. HE HAS ALSO BEEN A SENATOR, AMBASSADOR TO BRAZIL AND TO ECUADOR, AND VICE RECTOR OF THE CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF VENEZUELA. HE WAS VICE PRESIDENT OF THE SUPREME ELECTORAL COUNCIL AT THE TIME OF THE 1973 ELECTIONS. ON BEING SWORN IN SALCEDO REFERRED TO HIS FRIENDSHIP WITH PRESIDENT PEREZ DATING FROM THE TIME THEY WERE BOTH LAW STUDENTS TOGETHER IN THE 1840S AND SAID THAT UNIVERSITY WORK HAS BEEN THE CENTERPIECE OF HIS LIFE. "I HAVE EXCELLENT RELATIONS WITH THE VARIOUS POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS," HE DECLARED, "WITHOUT CONSIDERING MYSELF A POLITICIAN. AS TO MY EQUANIMITY ANY MY IMPARTIALITY, I BELIEVE THERE ARE PROOFS OF THEM IN THE SUPREME ELECTORAL COUNCIL."

3.COMMENT: SALCEDO WAS ENERGETICALLY ATTEMPTING TO SECURE HIGHER OFFICE FOR HIMSELF ALL THE TIME HE WAS AMBASSADOR TO FRANCE. FIRST HIS AMBITION WAS TO BECOME FOREIGN MINISTER IN SUCCESSION TO DR. SCHACHT. WHEN RAMON ESCOVAR SALOM BECAME FOREIGN MINISTER IN JANUARY 1975, SALCEDO CONCENTRATED

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ON THE SECRETARY GENERALSHIP OF THE PRESIDENCY AND HAS BEEN

WAITING WITH UNDISGUISED IMPATIENCE FOR SCHACHT TO VACATE THAT
OFFICE. REPORTEDLY SCHACHT WAS OFFERED THE PARIS EMBASSY,
BUT DECLINED.
SHLAUDEMANN

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